

James T. Jeremiah  
Offensive Defense  
May 21, 1981

Transcript

James T. Jeremiah:

Thank you, [Rolan 00:00:04]. I want to say a word of appreciation to the students and faculty who pray for us. We thank God for the opportunities he's given to us in the ministry of the word and for the knowledge that you pray. I also want to say a word of gratitude to the Lord and to you for the ministry of Dr. Dixon. I have been grateful through the years for the faculty he has put in this school, that academics have had a high place on the priorities, and God has given us a great faculty. But I'm glad we have an evangelist leading the college, because with all the academics, without a soul-winning desire in the part of all concerned, we could end up pretty dead.

James T. Jeremiah:

And I'm glad that God put this man in this place. I'm glad for the way he has permitted us to work together. I have a good time with him. I tell everybody out in the meetings where I go, that we work together like a father and a son, I'm the son, he's the father. In the view of the fact that it gets back through the grapevine to him eventually, thought I'd better make a public announcement of what I've been doing. There are probably other things that I do that he doesn't know about, but when I'm long gone, and he's still here with the olden years, he'll probably learn, but too late. Well, we thank God. Thank God for what's happening in this school.

James T. Jeremiah:

I'm glad that last weekend had basketball and quadrivision, four games at once, over there. We don't have enough excitement with one, we have to play four. I'm glad for what's happening in these dorms. I am happy that we had a funeral the other day for Williams Hall as a dormitory, and it's going to be elevated to higher things, so say some of them, but I've got a lot of interest in those who passed through Williams Hall, some more rapidly than others. Some left, never to return. Others went out to come back and we're glad for all who've had a part in being a testimony for Christ in this institution, now and in the future.

James T. Jeremiah:

We're going to speak out of Jude, the book of Jude, and you can open your Bibles to it. We want to pray, ask God's direction in what we say today. Our father, we come this morning to the word of God. And without the Holy Spirit directing us, we will not say what ought to be said and we'll leave unsaid things that ought to have been said. We're glad for the authorship of this book, the Holy Spirit authored it, and Jude wrote it, and we have it. We're glad for this little book, so important to us in these days. Speak to our hearts, we pray through the word of truth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

James T. Jeremiah:

Backslidden Christians, liberal theologians and some progressive educators shy away from the concept of indoctrination. Christians who are out of fellowship with God, obviously do not like the idea of being indoctrinated because it hits where they're living. Liberal theologians don't like it because they don't believe this book in the first place. And a lot of the progressive educators are humanist who think it's going to work out all right anyway. This school from its inception to the present time and will continue to be a school that indoctrinates. That's why we have Bible classes, Bible courses. That's why the faculty

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have been struggling through the years with a matter of bringing into the coursework, the teaching of scripture. We are told to teach doctrine, to teach the truth.

James T. Jeremiah:

In the word of God the phrase, the faith, is mentioned several times, for example, in Galatians 1:2 and 3, it speaks about, "Paul who persecuted us now preacheth the faith." 1st Timothy 4:1, Paul wrote, "Some shall depart from the faith." The faith. Philippians 1:27, Paul refers to it again, when he uses the phrase, "Striving together for the faith of the gospel." And the Lord Jesus Christ, in referring to his second coming said, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find the faith on the earth." The faith, is a term that summarizes the entire body of truth.

James T. Jeremiah:

Most preachers I know, who preach and love preaching, would much rather preach the gospel than anything there is to preach. There was a man in biblical times who wanted to do that with all of his heart. He said, "When I gave all diligence, when I tried to make it my business, to write unto you of the common salvation. Oh, says Jude, I so desire to write to you about this great salvation which we have in Christ." Incidentally, it's interesting to note that there is one Judas who became an apostate, and Judas the brother of James and half-brother of Jesus became an antagonist to apostates. And he's concerned about proclaiming the gospel, but he said it was a necessity, it was needful. "It was a burden upon me, that I should write unto you and contend that you earnestly contend for the faith."

James T. Jeremiah:

The faith. The sum total of what we believe, once for all that is given in its entirety for us, done for all time, given to us, never to be repeated, permitting no change, no additions, making no provision for latter day revelations. The faith, contained within the pages of the book we call the Bible. And Jude says, "I write that you earnestly contend for this." Why? Because as Jude goes on to say in this book, he recognizes that there are many attacks against it and there are in our day. Insidious errors creep in, immoral attacks come against it, people who want to live in their sin, don't like it, and so they attack it. You can see this almost every day on the media, in the newspapers, attacking what the Bible is and what it teaches, ridiculing it by bringing it into their comedies. Many attacks, immoral attacks. Incomplete teachings, those who've gone off on tangents rather than standing by the great truths of the faith. And probably even a greater attack than we realize are the indifferent attitudes of people who are fundamentalist and profess to believe it.

James T. Jeremiah:

"We need, says Jude, to contend earnestly for the faith." Now the word contend. It's an interesting little word. Well, it's a rather long word here, but in the middle of that long Greek word is the word from which we get agony, from which we get protagonist, antagonist, and it implies something of a combatant attitude, a battle going on. We are to contend about a thing as a combatant. To contend strenuously in defense of it. May I suggest to you today that this is not an option. This is not something that Bible believing Christians can vote on or vote against. It is a command. We are to earnestly stand with the faith, earnestly contend for the faith.

James T. Jeremiah:

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Let me tell you it costs to be a defender because when you're a defender, you're a disciple, and when you're a good disciple, you're a defender. And discipleship is always costly. You read church history and find out what it cost some, to contend with the faith. Think of some of those who died for refusing to practice what seems to be the common practice of today, infant baptist or baptism by a church that had the minds of some state authority.

James T. Jeremiah:

I read that just recently about a man, Felix Manz, who refused to follow the pronouncements of Zwingli and his crowd. And they put him in a boat and tied his hands together and put his arms over his knees, put a stick between his knees and his arms, took him out in the river, out in the lake and dumped him overboard. I wouldn't agree with everything that Felix Manz stood for, but he stood for something. And it cost, it hasn't cost us on the blood yet, but it'll cost to be a defender of the faith, to stand for the truth.

James T. Jeremiah:

I like to think of it in the relationship of Nehemiah. He was the kind of a man I like. He commanded his workers, with one hand, to do the work of building the wall and with the other hand, they carried a sword. So they had a trowel and a sword. And out of that designation, Charles Haddon Spurgeon prepared a magazine called The Sword and the Trowel. Not only is it necessary, says Nehemiah, to build the wall, but we must stand against the enemy. If all we do is stand against the enemy, we don't build a wall. And one of the tragedies that can come into fundamentalist ranks is to spend all our time standing against the enemy. And when we do that, we don't build any walls. And when we get so positive, we build walls with no observation of the enemy, the walls won't stand.

James T. Jeremiah:

Probably one of the greatest words in the English language that should be practiced by Bible-believing Christians is the word balance. We ought to have a balance in our living, in our outlook on life, in our serving, no building of walls without defense, no defense without building walls. And in this little letter, Jude has, I believe, this balance in view. Very interesting that he starts out in this letter, that believers are to contend for the faith, be in battle, stand for something.

James T. Jeremiah:

Some of you young people are going home into areas where the battle will be greater than it has been here. You're surrounded by Christians. You're going home perhaps to an atmosphere that will not be Christian. You will find yourself working with the ungodly. That doesn't mean you have to go in every morning with a chip on your shoulder and start a religious argument. That means though that you, as a Christian, that I, as a Christian better know what we believe and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks us of the reason for the hope that's within us. You're going home to your family. And some of them are unbelievers. What are you going to do with the faith?

James T. Jeremiah:

Jude said, as he closes this little letter, that there are certain things that we as Christians ought to be is good defenders. And with this, I want to close in a minute. Verse 20, he said, "But ye beloved..." By the way, three times in this letter, he uses that phrase, beloved. Isn't a bad idea to have your contending surrounded by, bathed in and controlled by love. And you'll see when Jude starts out, "Mercy unto you

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and peace and love be multiplied." And so he addresses these believers, "Building up your faith, building up yourselves on your most holy faith."

James T. Jeremiah:

Now that's interesting. We ought to have biblical knowledge. Paul in writing to, or speaking to the Ephesian elder said that, "I commend you to God under the word of his grace, which is able to build you up." See our building needs daily maintenance, and the daily maintenance comes by building ourselves upon our faith. Not necessarily increasing in faith here, though that's important, but our building in spiritual life must be based upon the faith. The faith that Jude's talking about. Christian attitude is to walk in him, rooted and built up in him, established in the faith, as you have been taught, we read in Colossians.

James T. Jeremiah:

To contend for the faith in other than a Christ-like manner is to lose the battle. We are to preach the truth in love, we're to be Christ-like. That doesn't mean we're to be weak. That doesn't mean we're to compromise. That doesn't mean we're to look out over the crowd and say, "Now, love does not permit me to speak unkindly of anyone's doctrine." Not of people, not of doctrine. The fact of the matter is, friend, it depends on whom you love first. And if our love for Christ is first, we'll have to speak the things that pertain to sound doctrine.

James T. Jeremiah:

In 2nd Peter, the writer talks about adding to your faith, build up in your faith, in that sense. One virtue added to another, there's a great chorus being developed, that's a little bit different. But we're to be building. In other words, that means we build ourselves up on our most holy faith. We are to know more and more and more about it. It may seem strange to you, those of you who are finishing your senior year and you have accomplished and accumulated about all the theology that's accumulatable. There isn't anything yet to learn. Oh, how disillusioned you are. You can keep on going and building and going and building until you're as old as Dr. Dixon and still there's more to go, more to learn. Do you know what's true of the Christian life? It is a life of constantly building on the faith. It never stops.

James T. Jeremiah:

The other aspect of right contending for the faith is involved in the next statement, praying in the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:26, it says, "The spirit helpeth our infirmities, our weaknesses. He maketh intercession for the saints." Only prayer in the Holy Spirit directed by the Holy Spirit will be heard and answered. When we pray in the spirit, he examines our motives, suggests the subjects of prayer, gives the words, directs the answers. When the apostle wrote of the great battle preparation in Ephesians 6, he talks about the armor of faith. And then the relationship of it to prayer, praying.

James T. Jeremiah:

During World War I, a regiment was lost in the Argonne Forest. They were sadly beaten because they had no communication with the outside armies. Many Christians are beaten, not in the Argonne Forest, but in the forest of a backslidden heart because the communication with the power that delivers has been hindered.

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James T. Jeremiah:

I remember reading some years ago, the story of Hannibal, took his elephants over the mountains, found himself in the Plains of Italy. And they're in that situation, he took it easy because he thought everything would be victorious. His men lived it up, became soft, they were not in contact with reality and their victories over the mountains were subjected into total loss because of their indifference when they thought victory had come. No victory is ever won without prayer. And no victory is ever kept without prayer. Praying in the Holy Spirit.

James T. Jeremiah:

Keeping is another word. Oh, you said, "I thought if I were saved, I was kept." Well, you are. And that same word by the way, is used five times in this little book. The word is preserved in verse one, and kept in verse six, preserved in verse six, 13 and so on, means to watch over, to be on guard. We keep ourselves in the love of God. How do we do it?

James T. Jeremiah:

Let me just take time before we come to the end of this message, to go back to the Gospels, to Matthew 15. And in that passage of scripture, very clearly, it tells us how we can keep ourselves in the love of God. Now that doesn't mean keep on loving God necessarily, though that's involved, has nothing to do with whether God is going to keep on loving us, because his love is eternal and it never ceases, but to keep ourselves in the sphere and the atmosphere and the blessing of his love.

James T. Jeremiah:

What's required? Let's look at it. Let's look at it in chapter 15:9 John, "As the father has loved me, so have I loved you. Continue in my love. If you keep my commandments, you shall abide, remain, live in my love. That will be the sphere of it all. Even as I have kept my father's commandments and abide in his love, these things, have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you." When you're in the sphere of God's love and keep yourself there, one of the things that will be true, we will have a love for the Lord Jesus Christ. And we will love others.

James T. Jeremiah:

We think about it again, the word of God says we're to be looking. Now, listen, we're contending for the faith. How do we do it? Well, we are told to build ourselves up. We're told in the scripture to keep ourselves in the love of God. Verse 21, "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ." We are strangers. When the word of God describes the patriarchs, especially Abraham, it says they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth, they seek a country. Philippians 3:20 and 21 says, "Our citizenship is in heaven, from whence we look for the savior." One who contends for the faith better be a good pilgrim. He better have his eyes on the Lord Jesus Christ.

James T. Jeremiah:

Someone says we're not to be other-worldly, that is, without use here. I've met some Christians who were so heavenly minded they were no earthly good. God doesn't want us to live like that. If we take that attitude, everything we are, we're just an adjunct to social service. Just content with the things that

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are here. And if we're other-worldly, or world affirming, as someone has said, then there isn't much left. But we're world-denying in the sense that we're living as if it were temporary, it's going to pass.

James T. Jeremiah:

And young people as you go out into the service of God, no matter where you go, if you get the impression that what you are seeing and what you are doing is the permanent everlasting thing. Forget it. It'll burn. It'll go. Looking unto the Lord Jesus Christ, keep your eyes on him and stand for the faith, battling down here, but never get our eyes off of the commander of the battle. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

James T. Jeremiah:

Now, this is what we ought to be doing, but there's one more. If I had a message titled for this, I guess I'd call it, Offensive Defense. And the best defense is the offense. It's very significant to me, and very important, I think, as we come to the end of this college year, that we remind ourselves how this great half-brother of Jesus ended his message. He said, "If you're going to be a good contender of the faith, be a soul winner." Pulling, snatching them out of the fire, almost an illustration of how God through the angel snatched Lot and his daughters out of Sodom, they didn't want to go, but they were snatched out.

James T. Jeremiah:

In this concept, the apostle uses the concept of compassion, having compassion. He tells us that it requires courage, [say] with fear. It takes courage to tell people, by the way that they're going to hell. And this kind of work cannot be done with a spiritual superiority that says, "Here we are, look at us." We better recognize the pit from which we've been digged, the life from which we've come and the sin from which we've been delivered. And the rottenness of our hearts that have changed by the grace of God, when we try to reach down and pull them out of the fire. Whilst compassion involves courage, it involves caution, hating the garment. We don't become like them, but they might become like Christ.

James T. Jeremiah:

Men who came by the man by the side of the road in the good Samaritan story, the good Samaritan came where he was but he didn't become as he was. There's a concept today that's I think dangerous, that if we're going to win people to Christ, we must find ourselves on their moral level and their spiritual level. The only way one can be snatched out of the fire is to be out of the fire and separated from that which brings contamination. The word of God says that we're to avoid every appearance of evil.

James T. Jeremiah:

Now, let me close by reminding you briefly that if we're going to be a good contender for the faith, we must be a good soldier to be in the arena where the antagonism is. Well, that word has agony in it. We must be a good builder to make sure that the building is going up correctly in its doctrinal content. We must be a good watchman, keeping ourselves in the love of God. We must be a good pilgrim, never getting fastened here, but remember we are people who live in tents and there's nothing that ties us here forever. But our eyes are upon the son of God who shall come someday soon, we must be a good soul-winners.

James T. Jeremiah:

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This college has stood through the years in a group of people that believes in contending for the faith. But let me be very careful to say to you, that contending for the faith is not just negative, battling people, it's standing against evil doctrine and evil ways, by demonstrating a positive ministry in a world that's lost. What are we going to gain if we battle the enemy and see the enemy go to hell? What are we going to gain if all we do and make our lives filled with just battle, without winning? Now, don't you misunderstand this, I believe and I'm sure others here believe, all of you, so far as I know, that we ought to stand for the truth, stand against error. But let's get involved into this Judean way of looking at it and have a positive approach in our lives to pray for, and seek to win the lost, and keep ourselves where we belong spiritually.

James T. Jeremiah:

There isn't a whole lot gained by a carnal backslidden Christian fighting a modernist. We need to be spiritual people, standing for the truth, because our eyes are upon the savior. He's the only one I know anywhere, who merits my eyesight to my vision. And I'm well aware of the fact that if it is impaired, I fail to live as ought to. Lord, keep our eyes upon Jesus these days. These students and faculty and staff go out this summer, we all go out to serve. We cannot win the battle by looking at ourselves and others' failures or successes. But we must keep our eyes on the one who is alive from the dead, living at God's right hand, waiting until he shall put his enemies under his feet. Even so come Lord Jesus. In his name we pray. Amen.